

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE

INFO AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV PRIORITY

S E C R E T STATE 217686

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, MOPS, SY, LE

SUBJECT: LEBANON'S SYRIAN PRESENCE

REF: (A) DAMASCUS 4957 (B) BEIRUT 4946

1. WE WILL MULL OVER VIEWS CONVEYED IN REFTELS AS REGARDS
AN APPROACH TO THE SYRIANS ABOUT A TROOP WITHDRAWAL ANNOUNCE-
MENT. CLEARLY, CONDITIONS IN THE LEBANESE SCENE AND THE
TIMING ARE FAR FROM RIGHT AT THE MOMENT. A FEW VARIATIONS
ON A POSSIBLE APPROACH HAVE OCCURRED TO US, HOWEVER. ONE
WOULD BE TO SUGGEST THAT THE SYRIANS PUBLICLY ANNOUNCE
THEIR INTENTION TO WITHDRAW A SMALL PROPORTION OF THEIR
TOTAL FORCES NOT NOW, BUT A FEW MONTHS HENCE, MAKING CLEAR

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THAT THIS WOULD BE CONDITIONAL ON A SATISFACTORY SECURITY
SITUATION IN AREAS THAT MIGHT BE SPECIFIED. THIS COULD BE
COUPLED WITH A STATEMENT THAT FUTURE UNITS WOULD BE WITH-
DRAWN SYSTEMATICALLY AS THE LEBANESE ARMY AND POLICE FORCES
BECOME CAPABLE OF TAKING OVER SECURITY FUNCTIONS. EVEN IF
WE SECURED NO MORE THAN A PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL SYRIAN
COMMITMENT THAT THEY WOULD MAKE OR CONSIDER MAKING SUCH A

MOVE AT SOME FUTURE MOMENT THIS YEAR, THIS COULD BE HELPFUL TO US IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE ISRAELIS AND PERHAPS KEY MEMBERS OF CONGRESS. THESE ARE ONLY IDEAS, NOT GUIDANCE.

2. AS FOR THE PROPOSAL THAT AMBASSADOR PARKER MIGHT GO TO DAMASCUS TO ACCOMPANY AMBASSADOR SEELYE ON CALLS ON CERTAIN SYRIANS, WE WOULD LIKE TO RECEIVE AMBASSADOR SEELYE'S COMMENTS. OUR INITIAL VIEW HERE, HOWEVER, IS SOMEWHAT BEARISH. AMBASSADOR SEELYE HAS NOT PRESENTED HIS CREDENTIALS AND, WHILE HE HAS ALREADY ENGAGED THE FOREIGN MINISTER IN SUBSTANTIVE TALKS, HE IS INTO ONLY THE INITIAL PHASE OF HIS MISSION. IN ADDITION, AMBASSADOR PARKER HAS BEEN TARGET OF MANY ABSURD AND MALICIOUS ACCUSATIONS REGARDING HIS ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE SYRIAN POSITION, AND A VISIT TO DAMASCUS IS ALMOST CERTAIN TO GENERATE NEW ALLEGATIONS AND PROBABLE MISUNDERSTANDINGS.

3. IT IS AN EXCELLENT IDEA, HOWEVER, FOR THE TWO AMBASSADORS TO MEET, SECURITY CONDITIONS PERMITTED, ON A REGULAR BASIS. CHRISTOPHER

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